

LRT – CENTRAL CORRIDOR

by Allen Perry Lovejoy




WHAT IS LRT?

- More than a Trolley, Less than Amtrak
- Accelerates & Brakes Fast
- Very Quiet (uses whistle or bell)
- Can travel up to 60 mph—not on Univ Ave!
- Stops at $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 Mile Intervals

WHY DOES IT WORK?

- Modern Technology
- Usually in Congested Corridors
- Attractive to Discretionary Rider
- Complements Bus Routes
- Strong Station Identity
- Tremendous Capacity

WHERE DOES IT WORK?

- Corridors with Lots of Current Transit Riders
- Corridors with Congestion
- High Density Corridors, or ones with Great Potential  Growth in Ridership
- Multiple Major Destinations
- Once Considered the Middle of I-94

WHERE HAS IT WORKED?

- Portland, OR – anomalous political environment
- Dallas, TX – big downtown, regional tax
- Seattle, WA – much more dense, big downtown, history of transit
- Minneapolis – 2X projected ridership(?)

WHY BUILD LRT?

- Mobility for both transit-dependent and discretionary riders
- Create Opportunities for Optional Living Lifestyles
- Prestige
- Supports Downtowns
- Part of Historical “City Building” (Comp Plan; student & senior housing)

WILL IT WORK IN CENTRAL CORRIDOR?

- Current ridership in corridor: 22k/day
- Recent developments show capacity for great density: Emerald Gardens, Episcopal Homes
- 2 Downtowns, Capitol Area, U of M (inc. new stadium), Midway employment center, regional retail, east end small businesses
- Congestion on Univ/I-94, and N/S streets

WILL IT WORK? – CONT.

- Congestion:
 - Natural Growth
 - Land Value Increases Now – central location
 - Oil Prices Enhance Regional Centrality of corridor
- Not radial
- No Land Acquisition Required

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS?

- Consensus:
 - Business Leadership
 - Small Businesses along Route
 - acquiescence of big box, auto dealers...
 - non-profits such as: Institute on Race and Poverty, Central Corridor Equity Coalition
 - Politicians: City, County, State, Fed.

WHAT IS NEEDED? – CONT.

- Non-Federal Funding – Feds to pay for up to 50%
- Operating Funding
- Deal w/Key Non-Funding Issues
 - Construction Impacts
 - Very Good Bus Service
 - Safety of Peds. and Autos
 - “Betterments”

WHAT IS NEEDED? – CONT.

- On-Street Parking
- Off-Street Parking
- Park & Ride; Park & Hide

WHO'S ON FIRST?

- FTA – approval and funding(?)
- State Legislature – bonding for capital costs, continued funding for operations
- MnDOT – Oversight of Final Design and Construction
- Metropolitan Council – Decision on technology (LRT v. BRT), Preliminary Engineering

WHO'S ON FIRST? – CONT.

- Metro Transit – System Operation
- Cities and U of M – Off-Line Infrastructure investments (N/S streets, Ped. Paths, “Betterments”), Land Use Planning, On-going business and community outreach beyond construction.
- Non-Profits and Community Groups – Ensure Fair and Complete Process

NOTES ON “CORRIDOR” INVESTMENTS

- Most efficient development of transit and dense development
- City led region in focus on Corridor Reinvestments
 - 1990 and 2000 Comprehensive Plans
 - Phalen Corridor, Riverview Corridor
 - “Station Area” planning

CORRIDOR INVESTMENTS – CONT.

- Lack of “Transit Culture” in Twin Cities area: Reflected in lack of adequate funding; resulting in a lack of service
- Crude Regional Understanding of Corridor Development
 - NOT fundamentally radial
 - NOT along freeways (dismaying Bus Corridor emphasis)

METRO COUNCIL SCOPE

- Lowering expectations for the project
- Three possible deletions:
 - Univ. of Minnesota Tunnel ~\$185m
 - University Avenue Re-construction
 - Completion to Union Depot

[City Administration continues to support second & third]

STATUS

- Completion of DEIS Phase I
- Draft & submission of “New Starts Application”
- City’s Comments on DEIS
- Hiring of Preliminary Engineering Consultant (late-2006)
- PE Work (2007-2008)

STATUS – cont.

- Full Funding Grant Agreement
- Final Design (2009)
- Construction (2010-2012)
- Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST)

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS